



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Huron-Manistee National Forests
Mio Ranger District
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Mio, MI 48647

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File Code: 1950

Date: August 24, 2010

Dear Forest Neighbor,

On April 24, 2010 a wild fire started in the Pine River Kirtland's Warbler Management Area (KWMA), an area of designated essential habitat, managed for the conservation and recovery of Kirtland's warbler. The fire was contained the following morning, however it had burned through approximately 270 acres or 80% of the Kobs KW Block. The trees in the block were seven years old and unfortunately too young to have produced cones with seeds for natural regeneration. Habitat suitability within this portion of the Pine River KWMA depends upon immediate reforestation of the burned KW block to provide a large-scale landscape of core habitat.

The Huron Shores Ranger District is seeking your comments on the Exhaust Fire KW Environmental Assessment (EA). The primary purpose of this EA is to regenerate jack pine to KW stocking levels in the burned block. The proposed project is located on National Forest System Lands in Iosco County, Michigan. The EA describes two alternatives that I will be considering. Each alternative provides a different level of treatment on National Forest System lands. The alternatives include:

- **Alternative 1:** The No Action Alternative would be deferred management and would not regenerate jack pine for Kirtland's warbler at this time.
- **Alternative 2:** This is the Proposed Action. Management activities include site prepping approximately 341 acres of submerchantable jack pine/oak with mechanical methods and to regenerate to jack pine at densities required for KW nesting.

Alternative 2 has been identified as the preferred alternative.

Enclosed for your review is the substantially complete EA for the Exhaust Fire KW Project. We are seeking comments and input from the public at this time. The EA complies with the 2006 Huron-Manistee National Forests Land and Resource Management Plan.

The Exhaust KW Project is still in the process of being completed and no decision has been made yet. At this time, I am requesting your comments on the project to allow me the greatest opportunity to consider them in making the decision. **Upon completion of the EA, there will be no further public comment period;** as permitted by our revised regulations for notice, comment and appeal (36 CFR 215, published in Federal Register Vol. 68, No. 107, pages 33581-33602).

This 30-day comment period provides the final pre-decisional opportunity for public review of the proposed actions and Chapters One and Two and Three of the EA. Comments must be received or post marked within 30 days of the date that notice for this comment period is published in the Oscoda Press. If the comment period ends on a Saturday, Sunday or Federal holiday the comment period shall be extended to the close of business of the next Federal working day. In order to have standing to appeal a decision under 36 CFR 215, comments must be submitted during the 30-day comment period.

Please submit your comments to: District Ranger Susan M. Kocis, USDA Forest Service, Huron Shores Ranger Station, 5761 North Skeel Ave, Oscoda, MI 48750; (Office hours 8-4:30, M-F) Telephone: (989)739-0728; TTY/TTD (989) 739-0806 (hearing impaired); Fax (989) 739-0347. Comments can also be submitted



via e-mail to: comments-eastern-huron-manistee-huron_shores@fs.fed.us. E-mail attachments must be readable by Microsoft Office 2000 or Adobe. Please include the project name in the subject line of the e-mail.

Comments received in response to this proposal will become a matter of public recordⁱ. If you have any questions, or need further information about this proposal, please contact Paul Thompson at (989) 739-0728 x 3026. Additional copies of the Exhaust Fire KW EA are available at the Huron Shores District Office (Monday – Friday, 8:00-4:30) or can be found on our website, at www.fs.fed.us/r9/hmnf/pages/proposed_projects.htm. Copies of the final Decision Notice will be mailed to those who have submitted comments on this proposal and to anyone who requests a copy of these documents.

We appreciate your interest in the management of the Huron Shores Ranger District.

Sincerely,

/s/Susan Kocis

Susan M. Kocis
District Ranger

Enclosures
Substantially Complete Exhaust Fire Kirtland's Warbler Environmental Assessment

ⁱ Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit such comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR 215. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27 (d), any person may request that a submission be withheld from the public record by showing how the Freedom of information Act permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that confidentiality is granted in only very limited circumstances. The Forest Service will inform the requester of its decision regarding a request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied, the submission will be returned and the requester notified that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address.

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